

Stay Awake

Revelation 16:15

Sooke Baptist Church

Sunday, August 15, 2021

9:30 am, In-person
also on Facebook and YouTube

Coffee/Question:

What happened to you
when God awoke your
spiritually dead soul?

03:00

Let's read our passage for today.

Revelation 16:15

Look, I come like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake and remains clothed, so as not to go naked and be shamefully exposed.

When I say the word “beatitude,” what do you think of?
Is it the teaching given by Jesus on a mountainside overlooking the Galilee?



I had the privilege of being there, on that mountain side in the spring of 1999. The beauty of the location provided a most remarkable backdrop to the unparalleled wisdom which Jesus revealed that day, as he described what life in the kingdom of God is like.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

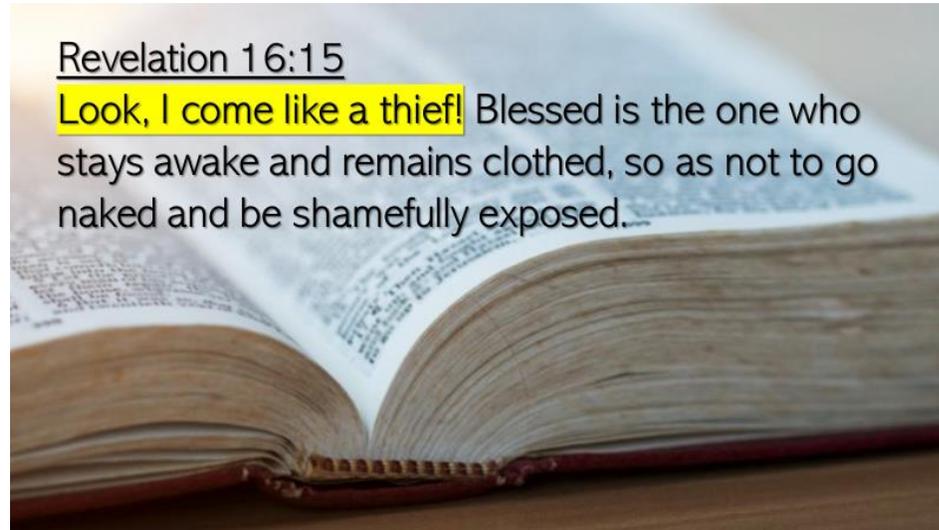
Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.”

Before the vision of the pouring out of the sixth bowl was completed, John, who was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day while on the island of Patmos.... heard a voice from heaven, a voice which was that of Jesus, who made a statement...

Revelation 16:15

Look, I come like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake and remains clothed, so as not to go naked and be shamefully exposed.



...and then spoke a beatitude, a blessing.

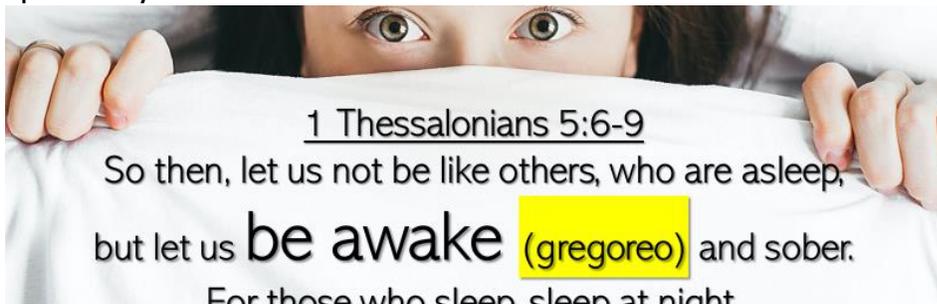
What is Jesus saying to his people? To his church?

Live attentively and purposefully in light of my immanent return.



The word “stay awake” in the original language is... gregoreo.
An important principle of Bible study is to interpret Scripture using Scripture.

There are other passages in the Bible that use this same word.
They help us gain a better understanding of what it means to stay awake
spiritually.



For those who sleep, sleep at night,
and those who get drunk, get drunk at night.
But since we belong to the day, let us be sober,
putting on faith and love as a breastplate,
and the hope of salvation as a helmet.

There are three contrasts made.

- Awake vs. asleep
- Day vs. night
- Sober vs. drunk

awake asleep

Normally when we sleep... it is quiet and dark and not much happens...

...unless you sleep in the daytime.

But has it ever happened to you... that you fell asleep at family night or a family reunion?

Can you remember how ever so slowly you became less and less aware of conversations, and of what others were doing... until... you were gone.

To spiritually stay awake
is to be aware of what is happening
in and around you.

awake	asleep
day	night

Have you ever had to walk through a room in your house at night when the power was out, and it was super dark?

Or have you ever been out on a moonless night walking in the woods you've walked through numerous times in the day?

I know for me... in those situations, I have to walk very slowly... tentatively.... in order to not stumble and fall, which is not the case when I walk in the daytime.

To spiritually stay awake
is to be aware of what is happening
in and around you.

To spiritually stay awake
is to have the light of God's person
illumine everything.

awake	asleep
day	night
sober	drunk

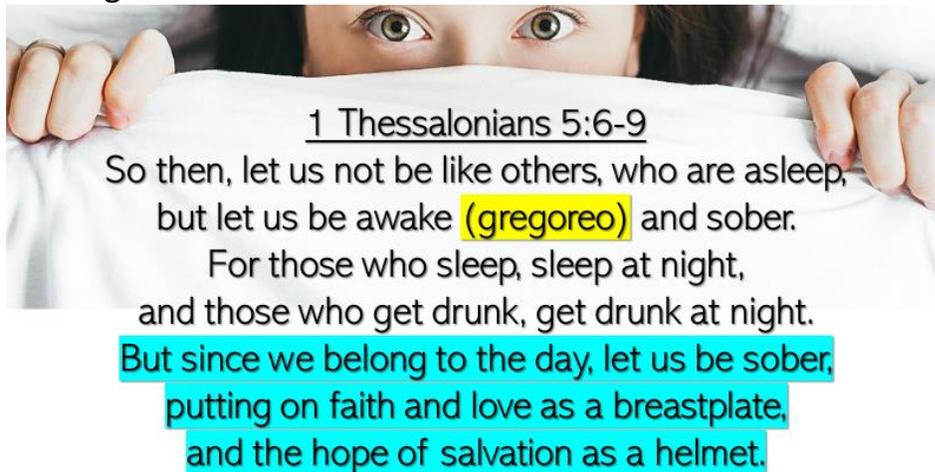
Before you came to Christ were you ever drunk?
Can you remember... how difficult it was to understand what others were saying to you... and in turn how hard it was to express yourself to others?

To spiritually stay awake
is to be aware of what is happening
in and around you.

To spiritually stay awake
is to have the light of God's person
illumine everything.

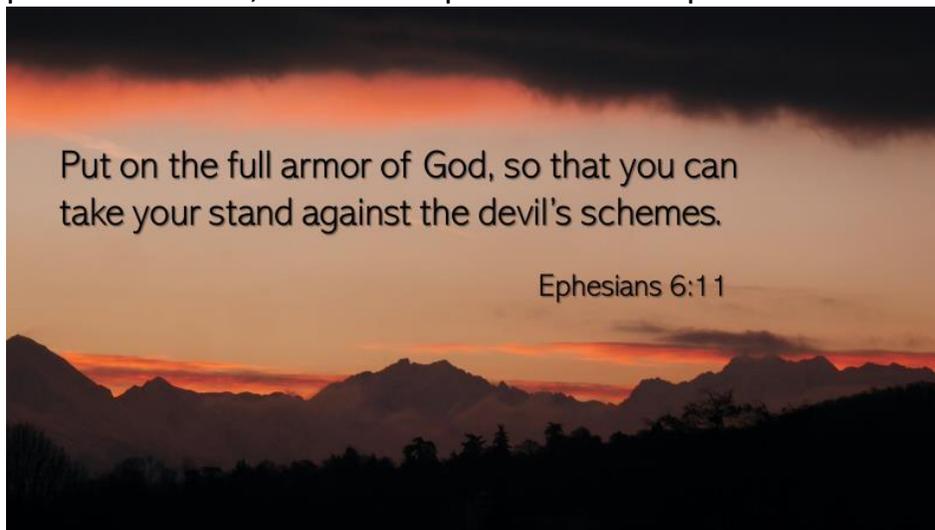
To spiritually stay awake
is to be under the control of the Holy Spirit.

Look again at 1 Thessalonians 5:6-9.



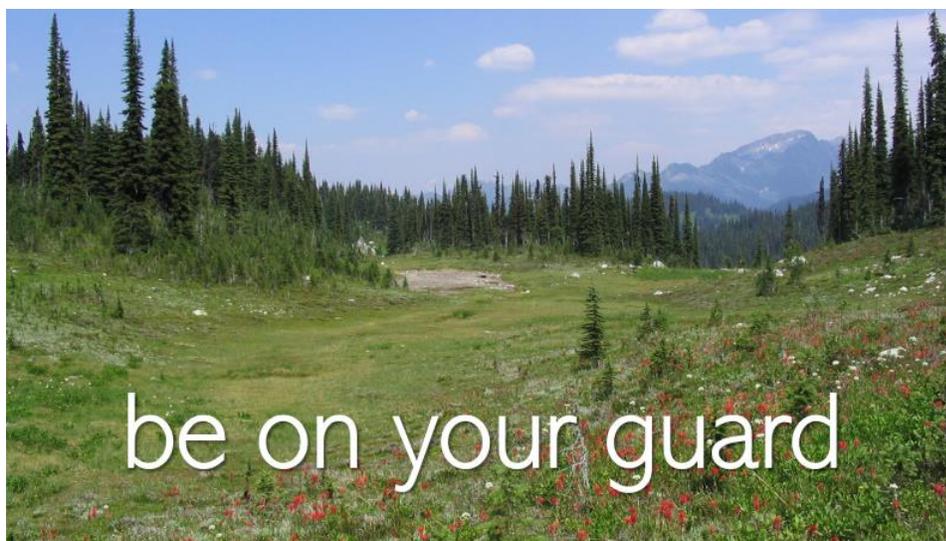
When the Holy Spirit awakens our spiritually dead soul, we know who we belong to - to the day; to the triune God.

And it is the Holy Spirit who teaches us, in light of who we are.... to put on God's provision – faith, love and hope – in order to protect us from...



... the schemes of the devil....who would want to make us drowsy; and cause us to stumble; and bring us under his control.

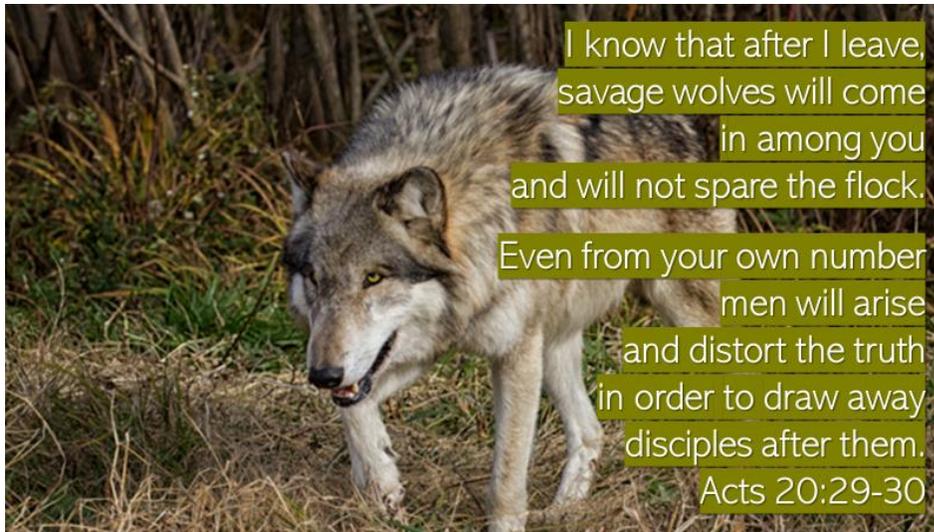
In Acts 20:31 the word gregoreo is used.



I had a friend in Revelstoke who would take me hiking in the alpine. When we'd hike Wally would constantly turn his head to the right and to the left. I remember asking him – "what are you doing?" and his answer, "I'm checking for grizzly bears."

Wally told me if he spotted a grizzly, he would either wait or take another route. He was constantly on guard as we hiked.

What was it that Paul warned the church in Ephesus about? What were they to guard themselves against?



In light of Jesus' immanent return, the people of God are urged to stay awake in order to be on guard – against error, that would creep into the church and then like a wolf, ravage people's faith and hope in God... by drawing them away.

This posture of being on guard made me think of Proverbs 4:23...





There is one more passage to consider.

Like Acts 20 it identifies a specific threat and then tells the believer how to use the resources of heaven to protect themselves.



To stay awake spiritually is to be intentionally... alert.

Alert to what?

To the threat of the devil.

He roars like a lion in order to intimidate and frighten.

But he is a defeated foe.

Jesus triumphed over him by the cross and the empty tomb.

However, until the return of Jesus the devil is permitted by God to continue to operate in this world... under the authority of Jesus Christ who sets the parameters of what he can and cannot do.

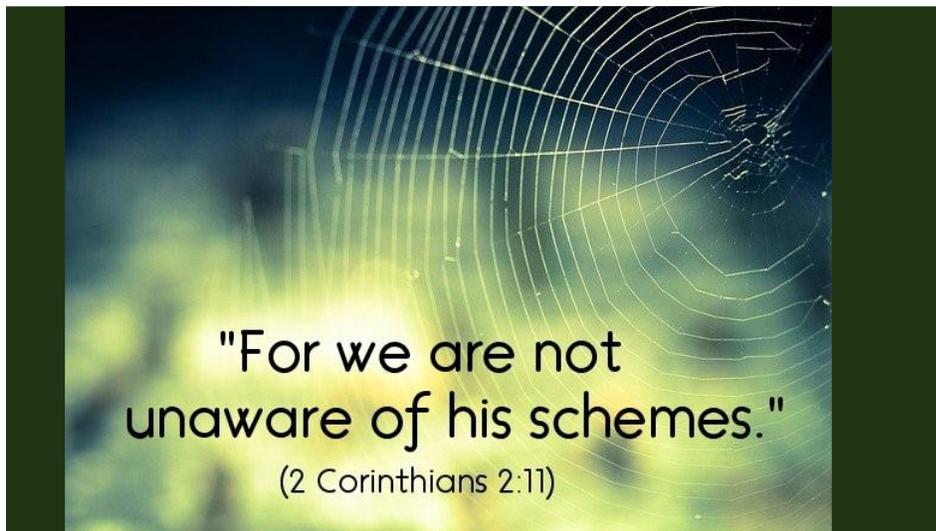
God does so for the sake of his glory.

The devil prowls.

He looks for vulnerable prey to devour.

But this is what God does for his people because Jesus rose from the dead.

He makes known....



...the schemes of our enemy.

To spiritually stay awake
is to be aware of what is happening
in and around you.

To spiritually stay awake
is to have the light of God's person
illumine everything.

To spiritually stay awake
is to be under the control of the Holy Spirit.

Before we came to Christ we were under the devil's authority.
But our Lord Jesus rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of God.

Look at the promise given in the book of James, 4:7-8...



Resist the devil,
and he will flee from you.
Come near to God,
and he will come near to you.

James 4:7-8

We resist all of the devil's schemes by living our lives upon the truth of who God is and what he has said.

The Scripture does not say the devil may flee when resisted.

It says he will!

The devil flees when resisted because the one who is in us; the one who empowers us to resist him... is greater.

As followers of Jesus, we live each day in light of the immanent return of Jesus, who says.... "Look! I come like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake..."

I love how Philippians 2 describes what this looks like.

Do everything without grumbling or arguing,
so that you may become blameless and pure,
“children of God without fault
in a warped and crooked generation.”

Then you will shine among them
like stars in the sky
as you hold firmly to the word of life.

Philippians 2:14-16

We live in a culture that is spiritually and morally dark.
But alive to God... the church of Jesus shines like the stars in the sky.
Jesus used another analogy to describe his church – he said we are like a city on a hill whose light cannot be hidden.

The followers of Jesus are a different kind of human being.

We are awake spiritually.

This is why...

We do everything without grumbling or arguing...

We are becoming blameless and pure....

We are without fault...

We hold firmly to the word of life...

Life Connection/Question

- How do you think the Holy Spirit wants to use the truth in this passage to encourage/embolden your faith?
- Are there issues or matters where the Spirit is urging you to be on guard; or to resist the devil and come near to God?
What do you think is your next step? Explain.

03:00

The Blessing



Revelation 2:25

"...hold on to what you have until I come."

that in our lives the majesty and beauty of God may be displayed, like a city
Look at Philippians 2:14-16

As Philippians 2:

... that we would live wisely and with grace and in us, individually and as a church
not be caught off guard

The Holy Spirit who lives in us brings to us the resources of heaven

is a walk where we are purposefully aware of both the seen and unseen realities
around us; where we are learning to see with the eyes of faith

The devil attempts to overwhelm our soul

This defeated fo

While Jesus defeated the devil, in this present time he is still permitted

This verse also speaks of the unseen spiritual conflict that is ongoing in the world and identifies the leader who is said to be our enemy.

But the leader of this rebellion

Particularly, the followers of Jesus ... are to stay awake in the sense of... being perceptive of a specific threat.

The threat is that of the devil and the means he uses to intimidate... fear... and his intent towards all humanity, but specifically towards the believer... to devour.

The Scripture says the devil can be resisted by those who are alert... by those who stay awake.

What is the blessing of staying awake?

Living in the power of the Spirit, overcoming the devil, as Revelation

You and I stand firm in our faith as we stay awake, on guard and alert spiritually.

Throughout the Bible... the Scripture encourages Jesus' followers to faithfully persevere and to not grow weary and to not give up.

What is our motivation in doing so?

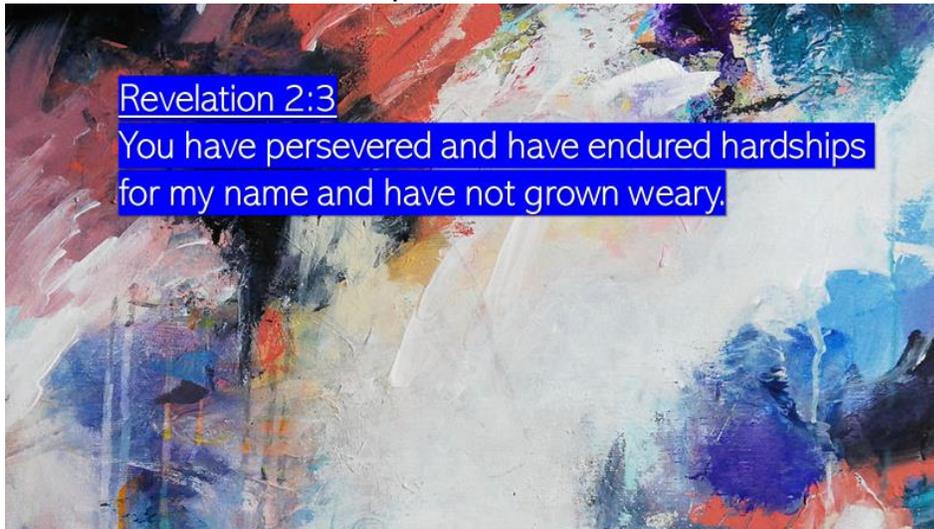
Jesus is coming soon!

But wholeheartedly following Jesus is not easy... and it often is costly.

Do you remember when we worked through Revelation 2-3?

Jesus repeatedly spoke of this theme – perseverance... as he addressed the seven churches of Asia Minor.

He said to the church at Ephesus...



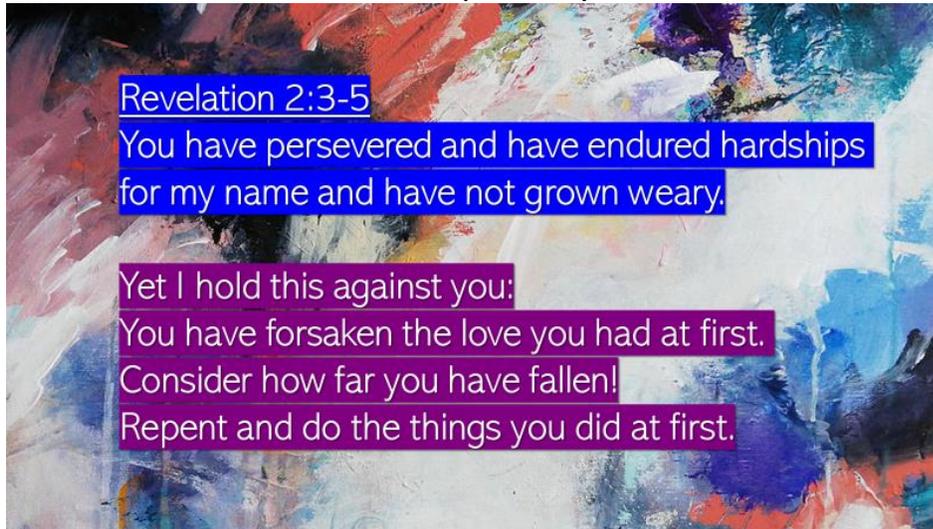
They persevered in response to the promise of Philippians 1:6, “he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Jesus Christ.”

It is important for you and I... to pay careful attention... to what is important to Jesus.

He commends his people for perseverance and endurance of hardships and for not growing weary... and giving up.

But those believers in Ephesus...were not yet home with the Father.

Some of them had years and decades yet to live on the earth. This is why Jesus, not only commended, but pointed out to them specific issues, which if not addressed could spiritually derail them.

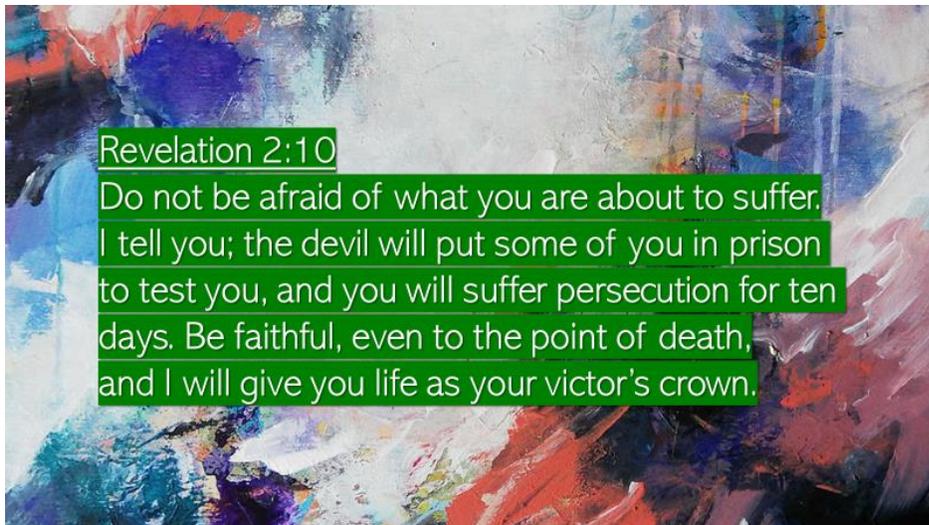


According to Jesus it matters how... a follower of his pursues a long obedience in the same direction.

Those who go the distance, those who come to the end of their life still following Jesus, will do so, because they have loved Jesus with all of their heart, soul, mind and strength.

If ever we lose our first love, we've lost our way.
And if that happens, Jesus says, we need to go back to where we first began...
back to the cross, back to the empty tomb.

To the church in Smyrna Jesus said...



Revelation 2:10

Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you; the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor's crown.

There it is again – be faithful...even if it costs you your life.

To be faithful, to persevere in the faith, means there will be times when we'll encounter suffering because of our association with and allegiance to Jesus; or there will be times when the Father, in sovereign wisdom may permit the devil to test us for a period of time defined by God... which in the case of the believers in Smyrna was 10 days.

When suffering or persecution happens, Jesus tells his people to not be afraid.

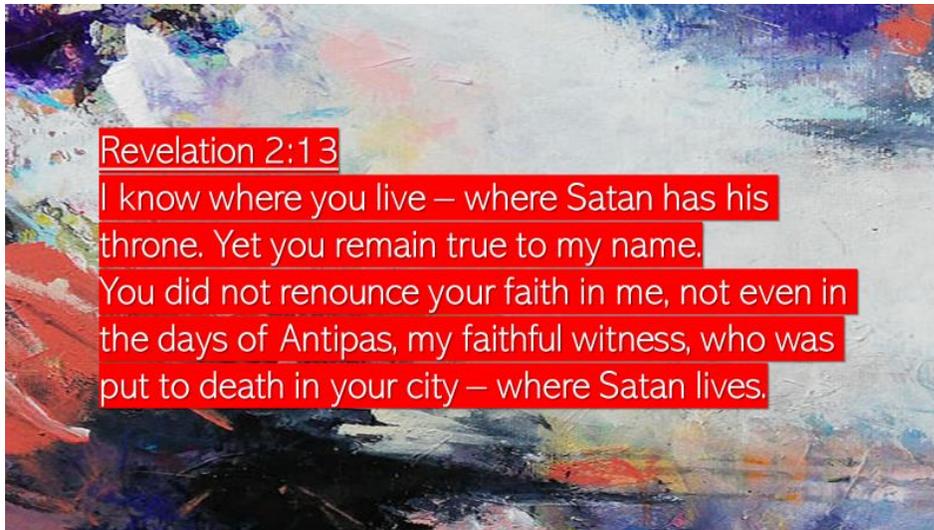
On what basis?

On the basis of this most incredible truth... everything that touches our lives first passes through the Father's hands.

What he permits for the sake of his glory and for the transformation of our lives.

In such times, like Jesus, who fixed his eyes on the Father, we too fix our eyes on him, who is the pioneer and the perfecter of the faith.

To the church in Pergamum Jesus said...



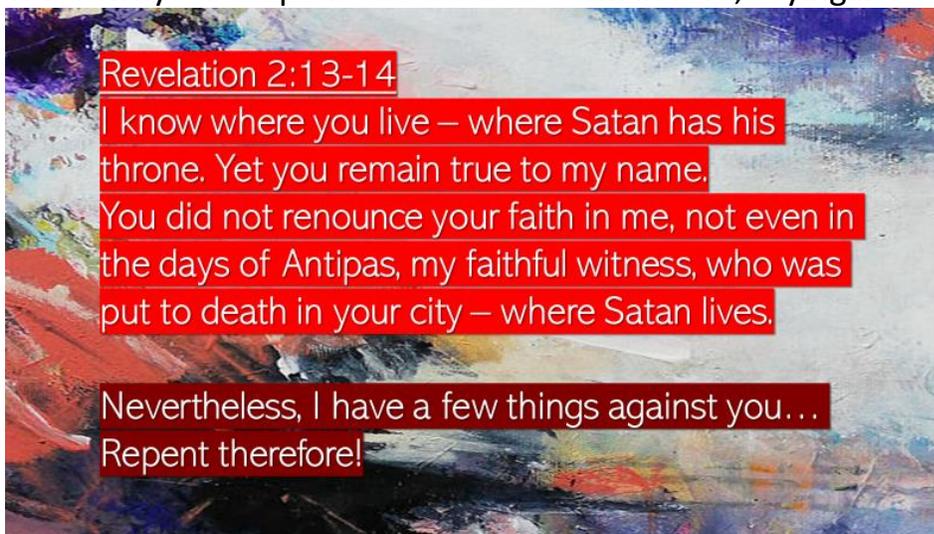
There it is again – faithful obedience.

Jesus commended his followers in Pergamum for how they kept the faith, in a tough location...where Satan had his throne... and during an intense time of persecution.

But similar to the other churches, some of the believers had years and decades yet to live on the earth.

If they were to run the race Jesus had marked out for them... if they were not to end up sidelined... there were things in their lives which Jesus identified, things which they needed to repent of... otherwise they would stumble.

This is why Jesus spoke the truth to them in love, saying....



Are you beginning to see that a long obedience in the same direction will demand of us an attentiveness to the voice of the Spirit, who as often as it is necessary,

will bring to our attention anything that we need to repent of... in order that we might keep in step with him?

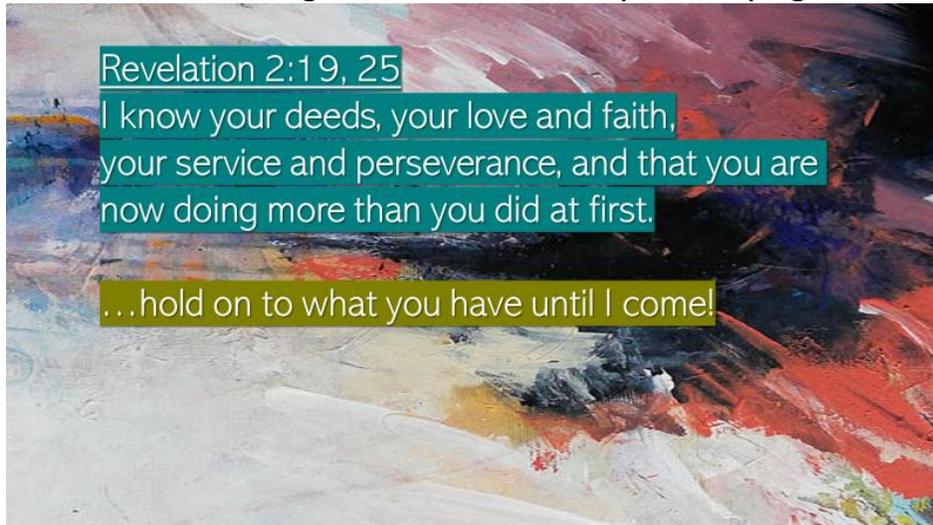
To the church at Thyatira Jesus said, 2:19...



There it is again... faithful obedience and perseverance.

What Jesus said to his followers in Thyatira reminds us that our lives are an open book to God.... who not only sees our actions... but who knows the thoughts of our mind and heart.

Then Jesus encouraged the faithful at Thyatira saying to them, 2:25...



To hold on... implies... there is pressure to let go.

To hold on... requires resolve and effort.

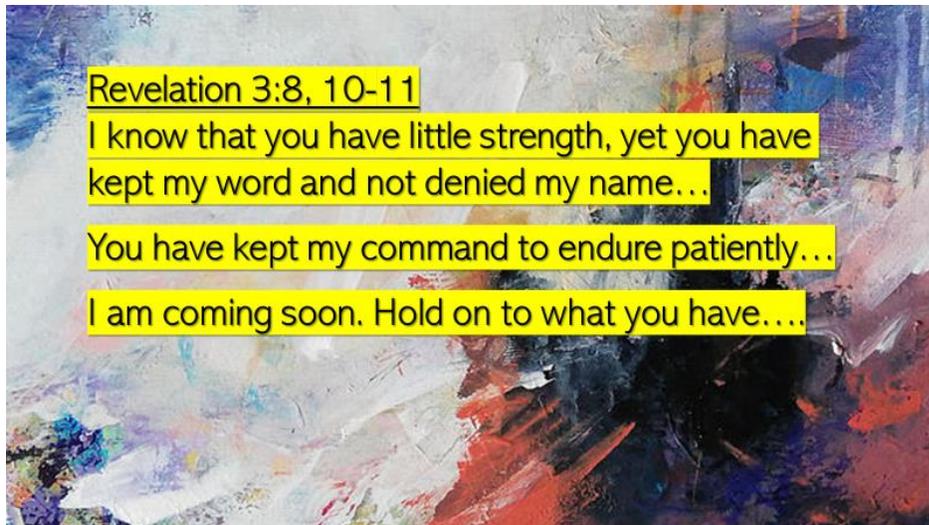
For the follower of Jesus, we hold on to God knowing he holds on to us.



But for how long are we to hold on?



To the church at Philadelphia, Jesus said...



Revelation 3:8, 10-11

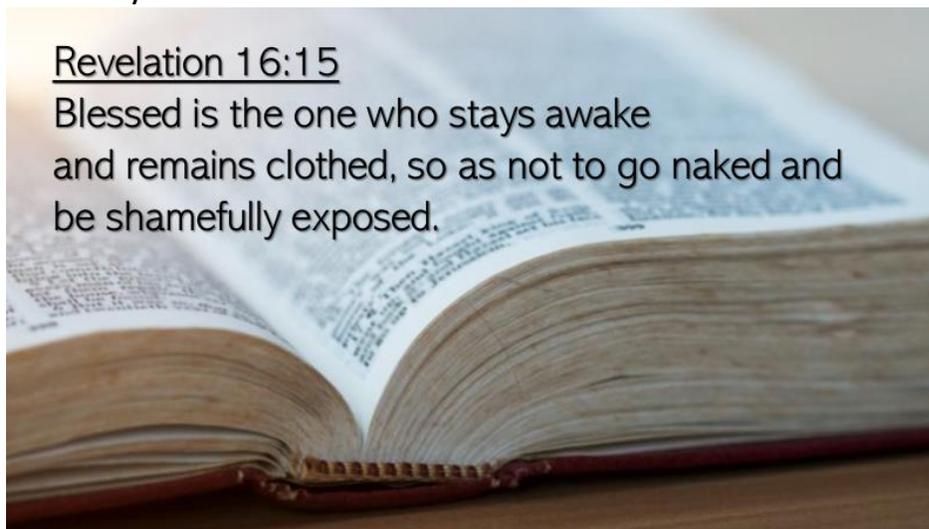
I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and not denied my name...

You have kept my command to endure patiently...

I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have...

There will be times, when we follow Jesus... in weakness and with little strength. It is so encouraging in such times to hear Jesus say... "hold on to what you have." The grace of God is sufficient, and his mercy is new every morning.

What Jesus said to the churches of Asia Minor is succinctly restated in our passage for today...



Revelation 16:15

Blessed is the one who stays awake and remains clothed, so as not to go naked and be shamefully exposed.

And the implications of what Jesus said to his people is this verse?

Revelation 16:15

Look, I come like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake and remains clothed, so as not to go naked and be shamefully exposed.

Obedience brings great blessing, and conversely, compromise only and always leads to exposure and shame.

There are several things in the passage... **Blessed is the one who stays awake...** we need to highlight or clarify.